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REACTION OF THE WAR UPON ISLAM

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The effect of the war upon different nations and countries will necessarily be far-reaching and fundamental. Geographies will be revised and new alignments between the leading powers will be inevitable. No political changes however great and startling can equal in significance those that the war is bringing about in the realm of religion. At first glance this may not be wholly apparent. We have been so absorbed with the diplomatic and national phases of the war that little thought has been given to those other questions whose relations to the horrors of a world conflict seem so remote. Two religions, representing together a following numbering nearly if not quite one-half of the population of the world, are chiefly concerned: These are Christianity and Islam. The effect upon the one differs greatly from the effect upon the other.

We all distinctly recall the question that was heard upon every side when the war had been thoroughly launched and we began to realize its significance: Has Christianity failed? This was asked not only in countries not Christian and by those who were no friends of Christianity, but in the very citadels and historic centers of the Christian church and by those who for decades had been conspicuous Christian leaders. Christian and non-Christian, believers in Christianity and its opponents, suggested, by inquiry, the failure of Christianity because it did not prevent the conflict. It is no part of our purpose to answer this question, but only to call attention to the significance of its asking. When before in all the history of wars—civil, domestic or international—has anyone ventured to suggest that Christianity might have prevented war? Wars have been taken for

granted and Christianity has been taken for granted, two quite separate ideas, and few if any have attempted to recognize the existence of any possible relations between them. But now, from widely separate portions of the globe, and put by people of vastly different points of view, simultaneously the inquiry is made as to how it comes about that Christianity did not prevent this deadly clash of nations. This fact shows conclusively that there has come to exist, through some means that we need not here discuss, a belief that Christianity possesses that which, if properly applied, ought to have intervened. It is a revelation that large numbers are of the opinion that there is a moral and religious force in Christianity that, if widely accepted and wisely applied, would make war of this character impossible. In a word, the war has caused the world to recognize that Christianity is a religion that has a national and international mission and that it will not come to its own and accomplish its purpose until it puts the stamp of brotherhood upon the national life of the entire world. The war has discovered to us and the world our failure hitherto to grasp the national mission of our religion.

The effect of the war upon Christianity is to bring to the front the fact that in Christianity there exists a moral and religious force capable of cementing the nations into a mighty brotherhood into which no unholy ambition for conquest or unholy race prejudice shall be permitted to disturb permanent order and lasting peace.

This subject is too far-reaching to be discussed within the limits of this article, the chief purpose of which is to give emphasis to the effect of the war upon Mohammedanism, a phase of the subject little understood but of vital significance to the 230,000,000 Moslems in the world and of striking interest to all Christians.

Mohammedanism is probably less understood than any other religion. We are confused by the nomenclature of Islam and the variety of names which the followers of Mahomet bear in different countries. Repeatedly from the beginning of Islam and even today, race names are employed to designate religious adherents. The early Moslems

were called Arabs whether they were of that race or were Jews who had embraced Islam. In Spain Mohammedans were called Saracens as they were also designated in Palestine and Syria at the time of the Crusades. In India the Mohammedan Empire bore the name Mogul or Mongol. In Russia Moslems today are called Tartars; in Mindanao in the Philippine Islands they are called Moros; and in Turkey they bear the name Turk, quite without regard to the race to which they belong. This diversity of name in different countries to designate the followers of one religion, is necessarily confusing and may have given a false impression to many. The point for us constantly to bear in mind is that in spite of the diversity of name and race, all who profess belief in Islam are bound together by bonds that are stronger than those which unite most co-religionists.

To return again to the war and its effect upon Islam, we are confronted with the fact that the final outcome of the war will probably be more disastrous to Mohammedanism than to any or all other religions. It is upon Mohammedanism that the most startling effect has already been produced, while still more fundamental changes are threatening. We must bear in mind in the consideration of this subject that from the days of Mohammed until the present time Mohammedanism has not only been a religion but it has aspired to be a theocracy. Mohammed was not only the religious head of all who accepted him as the divine prophet of God, but he was the civil and military head as well of all his followers. The various caliphs who have claimed to be his successors upon earth have been both religious and civil rulers, commanding large military forces and exercising supreme civil power. The caliphs have been autocrats of the highest type, basing their civil authority upon their religious rights and responsibilities.

Another point to be borne in mind is the fact that one of the most prominent elements of strength in Mohammedanism, and that about which they have spoken with the greatest frequency, and the point which they have used the most widely in promoting their faith, is their expectation of ultimate control, as a religion and as a political power, of all the

nations of the world. Mohammedans have freely recognized that at present they do not hold a superior place among the nations, although at the time of Suleiman the Magnificent, the Ottoman Empire, over which ruled the boasted Caliph of Islam, was the largest, strongest and most feared of any empire on the face of the earth.

In promoting Mohammedanism among pagan tribes and in holding up its supremacy to followers of other religions with whom Mohammedans came in contact, the ideal of the final triumph of Islam as the one conquering religion, with religious and civil power, has been constantly kept to the front. Mohammedans have believed that they would one day, through divine intervention, conquer and rule all the races of the earth, and that upon the throne of the nations was to sit the supreme, unconquerable, all-powerful Caliph of Islam. The humblest negro of Central Africa who has become a Mohammedan has been taught to think of himself as an integral part of a conquering world power.

In addition to the expectation of world conquest is their boast of religious unity. Christianity has been held in contempt by them because of its divisions. They have observed the gulf existing between Catholics and Protestants and the breaking up of Protestantism into many different sects, and have contrasted this divided state of Christendom with the unity of Islam. They have instanced their own simple creed, their one universally accepted, authoritative book, their acknowledged Prophet, and their religious principles respecting a holy war, and have been able to maintain that Mohammedanism is a united force operating through 230,000,000 of believers abroad in the world. They have claimed that not only are they able to live together in harmony but that they are ready to join forces in the resistance of any common enemy and, if need be, to die to the last man for the defense of their faith.

It is true that this unity has not been fully realized in actual practice, even under the leadership of the great caliphs and when the Ottoman Empire was the greatest and most mighty empire on earth. This fact was recognized by Abdul Hamid II, who made supreme effort to weld together

the different Mohammedan elements and races into a moral, religious and even organic unity. Pilgrimages to Mecca and Constantinople were conspicuously encouraged, and the pilgrim who visited the Bosphorus and was given audience with one who claimed to be the Great Caliph, returned to his home loaded with royal presents, forever thereafter to proclaim the magnificence of the Turkish Empire, and especially of Abdul Hamid, and to preach the unity of Mohammedanism. The Sultan was most active in sending royal expeditions in the interests of the unity of Islam to the remotest Moslem centers, and no endeavor was spared to impress upon all the followers of Mohammed the essential oneness of their religion and its ultimate triumph.

As an illustration of the success of this endeavor of Abdul Hamid, we have but to refer to the fact that when the United States was negotiating with the Mohammedan Moros of the Philippine Islands the negotiations were carried on at Constantinople by the United States Ambassador with Abdul Hamid, and the arrangements were there completed by which the Moros recognized the sovereignty of the United States. These efforts at Moslem centralization became so conspicuous that the expression, "pan-Islamism," was widely used in discussing what seemed to be a great revival of Mohammedanism. This movement caused no little alarm in the chancelleries of Europe because of the fear engendered that a united Islam might become an open menace to civilization. England was especially disturbed because of the eighty million Mohammedans in India and Egypt.

The decisive battles of Islam reported in history have been hitherto battles fought between Mohammedans and the armies of Christian rulers. The first of these is the battle of Tours, when the Saracens of Spain crossed the Pyrenees, in the eighth century, and attempted to conquer in the name of the Prophet, the capitals of Europe. The defeat of the Saracen forces by the troops of Charles Martel marked the first reverse of Islam in its triumphal march to victory. Through this victory the Moslem tide was turned again southward, until it finally swept over the Pyrenees and across Spain into Africa, and that part of Europe was freed from

Moslem rule. Centuries later, or in 1529, Suleiman the Conqueror, who brought Ottoman rule to the zenith of its power, sent his triumphal army to the north and west until they were halted before the walls of Vienna. Here the Christian forces again turned back the tide of Mohammedanism from sweeping over Europe, but in 1693, under Mohammed IV, the last and final concerted attempt to overthrow the forces of Christianity and plant Mohammedanism in the heart of Europe was again defeated. The would-be Mohammedan conquerors were driven back, and gradually one by one the conquered provinces of Hungary were restored to their Christian governments. From that time to the present there has been almost a continuous recession of the political forces of Mohammedanism. Roumania, Greece, Servia, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina were released from the power of Turkey. North Africa, country by country, has become freed from Moslem rule. Persia, even, no longer remains an independent Mohammedan power; and, last of all, Egypt has completely thrown off the yoke of Turkey and come under Christian rule.

In spite of these reverses, the imperial spirit of the Mohammedans was not broken. They still dreamed of the day when under some marvelous intervention of Allah the Christian nations would be severely punished for their resistance to the approach of Islam and Moslem sway would be re-established not only over the lost provinces but over the entire world. This dream and this hope has buoyed up the spirit of Islam and strengthened the arm of the followers of Mohammed even down to the outbreak of the present war. In October, two years ago, Turkey became one of the belligerent powers in the great European war under the recognized leadership of Germany and Austria. This step called out protests from many leading Mohammedans in Turkey as well as in India, although it did not cause immediate disruption. At the same time Mohammedan troops from India, Egypt and Morocco were fighting shoulder to shoulder with Christians on the plains of France. This is the first time in history that Turkey has been involved in a great international war as an ally of Christian nations. In the

Crimean war Turkey was defended by Christian nations against Russia.

The Mohammedans in Russia showed sympathy with Russia, giving her substantial aid, although she was the open enemy of Turkey. Even up to this stage of the war Mohammedanism had become hopelessly divided.

In November, 1915, it was decided to put to the supreme test the final resorts of Islam, namely a call for a holy war. This was a bold step to take in view of the already divided sentiment so conspicuously exhibited in France, Russia and Egypt. Under the direction of the Sheik-ul-Islam, at Constantinople, the High Priest of Islam for the Ottoman Empire, if not for the whole Mohammedan world, solemnly and formally, was read a fetva in the Mosque of the Conqueror at Constantinople calling upon the Mohammedans of the world to rise in a holy war against all enemies of Islam. In order to give this final test the fullest authority, on the following day the Sultan himself, as the Caliph of Islam, the Shadow of God on earth, the successor of Mohammed, repeated and emphasized the call, at the same time addressing his choicest body of Turkish troops and exhorting them and all Mohammedans to the ends of the earth to be loyal to their faith and to be ready to give themselves even to the last drop of their blood in its defense.

There has long been a fear, among the nations of Europe especially and even beyond, that whenever such a call for a holy war should go forth there would be a general response among the entire body of Mohammedans throughout the length and breadth of the earth. Since the day of Mohammed no such test had been applied, but according to Moslem belief, as recorded in the Koran and as repeatedly asserted in tradition and in history, it would be impossible for any Mohammedan to retain his position as a true believer and fail to respond with the offering of his life for the defense of his religion.

Quite contrary to expectation, no unusual display of fanaticism or of religious or political agitation followed even in Constantinople. From many different parts of Turkey protests were directed against what was considered an un-

holy alliance between the government of the caliph and Christian nations, especially since Turkey was not attacked and there appeared no possibility of gain on the part of the Ottoman government even should they be victorious; while, on the other hand, there was every possibility of serious loss. The Mohammedans of India held mass meetings of protest, and these protests were voiced in long telegraphic messages to the Sultan of Turkey. At the same time, messages of loyalty to Great Britain were sent from India and from Egypt. Abyssinia and Morocco severely criticised the alliance of the Ottoman Empire with Christian nations and refused to respond. And thus it was that the only call for a general holy war ever issued by the highest authority in Islam utterly failed of its purpose, resulting in a hopeless division among Mohammedans.

Persia showed marks of disloyalty, and as a final proof of the seriousness of the rupture, the leading tribes of Arabia united in open rebellion against the boasted Caliph at Constantinople. They took possession of the sacred shrines of Islam, Mecca and Medina, which through all Moslem history have been under the special care and protection of the Caliph and during the last 500 years under the Sultan of Turkey. In a message recently sent to the Sultan of Turkey, the Grand Sherif of Mecca, chief magistrate of the Holy City, a definite rupture between the Mohammedans of Arabia and the government of Turkey was definitely announced. The present leaders in Turkey by name are severely condemned for drawing Turkey into this fatal war. The proclamation ends with the statement, "God has opened the way to independence and freedom for us. Our independence is complete and absolute. Our aim is the preservation of Islam."

In the Ottoman Empire itself it is reported upon what seems to be unquestioned authority that not more than 20 per cent of the Mohammedans are in sympathy with Turkey's part in the present war or with the existing administration; the 80 per cent deprecate the entrance of Turkey into this conflict and the formation of an alliance that has already caused irreparable disaster to their holy religion,

to say nothing of the physical ruin it has brought upon their country. To make perfectly clear the extent of the disruption which this war has produced in the Moslem world we here quote a few passages from Mohammedan sources bearing upon the subject.

When Turkey joined Germany in the war the Aga Khan, speaking as the head of the Moslems in India, said:

Turkey was the trustee of Islam, and the whole world was content to let her hold our holy cities in her keeping. Now that Turkey has so disastrously shown herself a tool in German hands she has not only ruined herself but has lost her position as trustee of Islam, and evil will overtake her.

A Zanzibar Arabic paper recently said:

The pillars of the East are tottering, its thrones are being destroyed, its power is being shattered, and its supremacy is being obliterated. The Moslem world is divided against itself and everyone is busied with his own private interests. Brother no longer listens to the cry of brother. . . . What has befallen the Moslem world from their poisonous breath is due to the divisions of the Moslem world, their mutual hatred, and the divisions in their kingdoms. In this way they have lost the whole world, and their sickness is incurable.

One of the most influential Moslem daily papers published in Cairo, Egypt, says:

The interfering on the part of Turkey in the present conflict was an uncalled-for foolishness, and by her action Turkey has forfeited her right to the Caliphate. Nor is Turkey's claim to the Caliphate justifiable. Why should the Turk, that old Mongolian descendant of Othman, usurp the Caliphate from the hands of the true descendants and successors of Mohammed? Besides, Turkey's policy for several decades has been detrimental to Islam, and in many cases the Constantinople government has shown a hostile spirit to Mohammedans themselves, not to say anything of her ill treatment of Christians.

A Druse member of the Turkish Parliament wrote an article in one of the leading Mohammedan papers, the *Esh-Sha'ab*, in which he said: "Moslems have no hope except that the nations of Christendom shall rise against each other."

The leading Sheiks and dignitaries of Morocco recently

published a pamphlet called *The Moslem Verdict*, which has been widely circulated through North Africa. Among other significant things this pamphlet says:

The deplorable state in which the Ottoman Empire finds herself today is really due to the unsound policy of the Young Turks, who have brought the empire to the verge of ruin. The internal unrest and poverty was enhanced by the Young Turks' casting in their lot with the Germans and staking the heritage of those glorious ancestors who built up the Turkish Empire. This indeed is a great crime. But how could Turkey avoid losing her honor and independence when Anwar Pasha is nothing but an instrument in the hands of Emperor William, blindly obeying his commands, while the entire Turkish army is under the control of German officers? Even the religious institutions are now in the hands of the Germans! This particular crime, committed by the Young Turks in broad daylight, has aroused indignant protest throughout the Moslem world. Moslems have unanimously condemned this shameful conduct, and have raised their voices in India, Persia, Arabia, Egypt, Tunis, Algiers, Morocco, Central Africa, and other Mohammedan countries, censuring those wretched persons who are precipitating their country into an abyss of sure destruction. Even Moslems in Turkey have striven to oppose them, for there are those in Turkey who are genuine Moslems, of noble sentiments and who have the real welfare of Islam at heart, notwithstanding the consternation and terror to which they have been subjected by Anwar Pasha and his confederates. Those true Moslems disapprove of this war which was kindled by Germany, and declare openly their friendliness to France, England and Russia. The Moslems in the French colonies in Africa have also availed themselves of this opportunity to express their sincere love and loyalty to France. *Muftis*, judges, *sheikhs*, and *'Ulema*, well acquainted with the Mohammedan law and the precepts of true Islam, not to mention the chiefs, dignitaries and even petty farmers, have expressed what their hearts feel towards France. We may refer to the declarations coming from the great chiefs of the Sufi sects, and published as an appendix to H. M. the Sultan of Morocco's declaration and that of the Bey of Tunis. Such statements are indeed compatible with the Law; and if we add to them the numerous epistles coming from different quarters of the entire world, it would be clearly seen that by casting in Turkey's lot with that of Germany the Young Turks have committed an unpardonable sin against Islam and have excommunicated themselves from the brotherhood.

The *El-Moqattam*, a Moslem paper published in Cairo, had a significant signed article in its issue of February 16, 1915, upon "Moslem Independence." We make here a few quotations that show the tenor of the entire article:

Moslem as I am, I might likewise bemoan the lot of Islam, but my faith does not prevent my reason from ruling my emotions. . . . Moslem independence has, thanks to Enver and Tala'at, become a mere shadow of a past reality! The fact is that Moslem independence was in no age nearer to annihilation than it is at this time, nor have the Ottoman Mohammedans ever suffered more crushing humiliation than they are now suffering because of Enver, Tala'at and Jamal. Lands lost, provinces wrenched away, honor at stake—catastrophes unparalleled in the days of Abdul Hamid! The consequence is that our enemies have become more covetous of our property and more bold to do us harm. How then could we express sympathy at this time for Enver and his friends?

. . . . How can Enver, Tala'at and Jamal rightly be called the defenders of Moslem independence while they throw themselves, and us with them, into the arms of the Germans who treat us as a man treats his goods and chattels. Nor do I understand how they can claim to be the real defenders of Mohammedan independence while the Germans are the absolute rulers of Turkey. These "defenders" are driving our children and brothers and cousins into the jaws of death, not to restore something that has been lost, but to enlarge the boundaries of the German Empire and hoist its flag over every fortress and citadel! Yes, how can they claim to be the defenders of this independence while, ever since they came into power, they have punished every one who has had the welfare of Islam at heart? How can they, while they are fighting against the Quran and the language of the Quran? Yea, what right have those braggarts to boast of the government of Enver and Tala'at and Jamal as being the real defense of Moslem freedom while the Ottoman Empire has, owing to them, fallen to the lowest depths of misery?

. . . . It is desired by some to have an independent Moslem state, free of all European control. Indeed, this is both legitimate and patriotic. But this requires first to purge the nation of all fanaticism and superstition, and to allow reason full control over passions. Moreover, active and energetic men are wanted who would work wisely and sincerely and with true moral courage to realise these golden dreams.

Through the divisions cast into Mohammedanism by this war, converts today know no central Mohammedan power, no recognized Caliph. The cherished hope of the ultimate triumph of Mohammedanism as the ruling religious and physical force in the world is rapidly disappearing. Belief in Mohammedanism as representing adequate strength for world government has lost its place, even in Mohammedan thinking. The boasted solidarity of Islam no longer exists. There is no possibility of a return even to the former sense of

unity. The last great Moslem power, the Ottoman Empire, as the result of this European war, has already lost its national significance, and the Mohammedan world is casting about for a new Caliph. There is no evidence that such a leader who will be accepted by the entire Moslem world can be found. According to Moslem law the Caliph must be the ruler of an independent Mohammedan country, and today none such exists. By the agreement of the European powers, the Hejaz in Arabia, in which the holy places of Islam are located, may be set aside for Arabian self government and allowed for the time being to control these sacred shrines. There is no reason to believe that the Mohammedans of the rest of the world will recognize the ruler of that small territory as the universal Caliph. The breaking up of the unity and solidarity of Mohammedanism is of tremendous significance not only to the Mohammedan world but also to the entire Christian world.